

Hamilton/Labree Roads Groundwater Contamination Superfund Site

Community Involvement Plan

October 2021

This plan lays out how EPA will inform and engage with the local community while doing work at the Hamilton/Labree Roads Superfund site. This plan is designed to align with the needs of the community. Input from residents, businesses, local governments, and community organizations helped shape this plan.

In April 2021, before we drafted this plan, we asked local people about their views of the cleanup and how they want to be informed and involved. EPA community involvement coordinators interviewed nine people representing a diversity of views. We heard from community members, local business owners, an elected official, government officials, the local conservation district, interest group representatives, and others. We thank everyone who took the time to talk with us and share ideas. Although we talked with a small percentage of the population, it represents a wide spectrum.

From August 29 to September 20, we solicited feedback from the public on the draft Community Involvement Plan. Announcements went out by email, webpage, and newspaper display ad. We received feedback from one individual and made changes to the "About the community" section.

As this is a living document, we continue to welcome suggestions. Please connect with us at any time.



Community engagement goals

EPA's project staff is committed to a meaningful community involvement program.

Our goals are to:

- Make available timely, relevant information about site activities.
- Present information in a clear, understandable way.
- Foster open communication, responding to questions and concerns as they arise.
- Be clear about where the public can influence cleanup decisions.
- Offer formal public comment opportunities on major EPA decision documents.
- Listen to and consider local input.



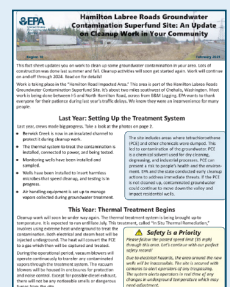
The Community Involvement Action Plan

EPA uses many tools to inform and involve people. To best serve the people of this community, including those with limited Internet access, EPA will provide information in a variety of ways. EPA will focus on the methods and activities listed below.

Fact Sheets

When we have important information to share about the site, we issue Fact Sheets. The Fact Sheets provide cleanup updates, meeting notices, or other news. We send them to people on our hard copy and electronic mailing lists, post them online, announce them on Facebook, and put them in the local library.

Continued ➡



Helpful resources to understand the cleanup

EPA has created some materials to explain our approach to cleaning up the groundwater contamination at the site.

- Video about the site history and cleanup, 4 minutes: <https://youtu.be/2yfLoplQ8vY>
- Video of June 2021 virtual show-and-tell on the treatment system: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=spyayZnvi2o&t=12s>
- Questions and Answers, 4 pages: <https://go.usa.gov/xdy7Z>
- About the Superfund Process and Hamilton Labree, two pages: <https://go.usa.gov/xwuqb>

Email announcements

On occasion, we send out information about cleanup activities to our electronic mailing list. To get on the list, contact lindsay.andrea@epa.gov.

Informal communication

Project managers and community involvement staff are available to talk with you about the site at any time. Feel free to contact us to share information, discuss concerns, or ask questions. Contacts are listed on page 6.

Community forums

EPA will host community forums if a need arises. For example, when EPA learned that many community members were curious about the treatment process, we held a virtual Show-and-Tell [see link above]. EPA project managers will also attend local meetings hosted by others, when possible and appropriate.

Formal public comment periods

During key decision points in the Superfund process, EPA announces and opens public comment periods. EPA carefully considers all public comments. No formal comment periods for this site are expected soon. Even so, we welcome input and suggestions at any time.

Working with the media

EPA announces meetings and review opportunities using display ads or calendar listings in the local newspaper, the Chronicle. We issue press releases to local media whenever there is important news to share. We also offer press availability sessions and are available for interviews with local reporters. We do recognize, however, that the agency doesn't have control over what the media reports.

Document collections: public information repositories

EPA provides space for the public to view records related to Superfund work at the site. You can review copies of all Administrative Records for this site at the location listed below. Also note that EPA maintains document collections online at www.epa.gov/superfund/hamilton-labree.

- Vernetta Smith **Chehalis Timberland Library**
400 N. Market Blvd.
Chehalis, WA 98532-0419
360-748-3301

Website

EPA maintains a website about the cleanup. Here people can find site activity information, background details, technical and legal documents, and much more. Visit www.epa.gov/superfund/hamilton-labree.



Language access

EPA will provide language translation and interpretation services as needed, to ensure that any non-English speaking individuals can have equal access to EPA materials and activities. To date, these services have not been requested and a need has not been identified. To make a request, contact lindsay.andrea@epa.gov.



Facebook

Sometimes EPA posts site updates on its regional Facebook page.
www.facebook.com/eparegion10

Mailing list

EPA maintains both hard copy and email mailing lists of people who may be interested in the cleanup. To get on our mailing list, or to be removed, contact lindsay.andrea@epa.gov.

Background

The Hamilton/Labree Roads Groundwater Contamination site is located about two miles southwest of Chehalis, Washington. The site is contaminated with PCE, an industrial solvent. In the past, PCE was spilled and dumped in Berwick Creek. Also, drums and other containers of mainly PCE and hydrocarbons were buried in the area of what is now known as Operable Unit 2. Release of the PCE from the buried and dumped containers contaminated soil, sediment, groundwater, and surface water. Based on initial investigations, no PCE contamination has been found east of Interstate 5.

EPA and the state conducted early cleanup actions to address immediate threats. Risks to people's health and the environment remain. In 2013, EPA selected a cleanup approach for the site. Cleanup work is now underway.

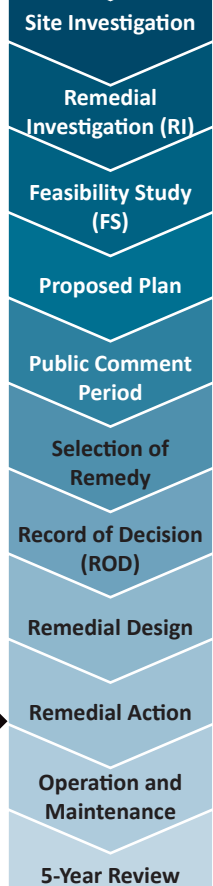
The site includes two areas where releases of hazardous chemicals occurred: the 10-acre Hamilton Road Impacted Area (HRIA) and the 11-acre area now known as Operable Unit 2. The site also contains an area called the Thurman Berwick Creek Area where a release is likely to have occurred. Contaminated groundwater plumes originating from these areas extend to the North/Northwest of Hamilton Road as well as west of Labree Road.

For administrative purposes, the site has been divided into two units, called Operable Units, or OUs. The HRIA is OU-1. OU-2 includes all impacted property north-to-northwest of OU-1, including the former drum burial location, the Livestock Market area, Thurman Berwick Creek Area, and some further downgradient areas.

What is Superfund?

Superfund is a federal law authorizing EPA to clean up contaminated sites. Its official name is the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, or CERCLA.

The Superfund Process



PCE

The site includes areas where PCE and other chemicals were dumped. PCE can present a risk to people's health and the environment. PCE is a chemical solvent used for dry cleaning, degreasing, and industrial processes. It is sometimes called perchloroethene, tetrachloroethylene, tetrachloroethene, or PERC. PCE is a volatile organic compound, or VOC. More about PCE: <https://go.usa.gov/xdaCP>. PCE was dumped in Berwick Creek or disposed of in drums and has contaminated the soil/sediments in the creek that we are cleaning up now, and PCE has contaminated the groundwater. EPA and the state have taken action to address immediate threats. If the PCE is not cleaned up, contaminated groundwater could continue to move down the valley and impact residential wells.



What has been done to clean up the site?

Contamination was first identified at the site in late 1993-early 1994 by the Washington State Department of Health. Out of 18 private water wells sampled, PCE was found in six. EPA conducted short-term cleanups to address immediate threats to people's health and the environment. Actions included removing drums, pails, and cans from beneath Building B on the property known as the Livestock Market area; supplying bottled water to affected well owners for drinking and cooking; and expanding the Chehalis municipal water supply system to affected residents. More recently, work has begun to clean up underground contamination using thermal treatment and bioremediation. To date, the treatment has removed about 7600 pounds of chemical, or about 1000 gallons. We started cleanup in OU-1 since it is upgradient of other sources of contamination to the groundwater. Downgradient sources will be investigated in OU-2.



Is my drinking water safe?

Yes. Past cleanup at the site addressed immediate threats to people's health and the environment. Actions included supplying bottled water to affected well owners and expanding the municipal water supply to affected residents. EPA is now cleaning up the contamination so that your drinking water stays safe. PCE and other chemicals got into the groundwater in the area. The contaminated groundwater flows west and northwest across the Newaukum River Valley. Now, many of the area homes and businesses use drinking water from the City of Chehalis public water supply system, not the impacted groundwater. However, if the contamination is not cleaned up and continues to move down the valley, people not on the public water supply may be at risk if they drink contaminated groundwater. EPA continues to monitor private water supplies downgradient of the known contaminated areas.

What is the current site status?

Cleanup at OU-1 began in 2020, and more cleanup is occurring in 2021 and beyond, including:

- Temporarily rerouting Berwick Creek around contaminated areas.
- Removing PCE from the areas with highest concentrations, by heating the PCE-contaminated soil and sediment then collecting the contaminants before discharging either air or water, and by treating contaminated groundwater using bioremediation.
- Placing limits on future activities at the site.
- Monitoring the site to make sure the cleanup protects people, wildlife, and the environment into the future.

This work will inform any future response actions at the site. More cleanup may be needed in the future.



Safety Considerations

EPA would like to remind everyone to follow safety guidelines related to the site. Where there are signs or fencing, trespassing is prohibited. Follow posted speed limits in the area and be alert for traffic flaggers and re-routes.

About the community

The Superfund site is in a rural community located about 2 miles southwest of the City of Chehalis, in Lewis County, Washington. The area is mostly agricultural and lightly populated, with some commercial and light industrial activity. The Newaukum River and Interstate 5 feature prominently in the landscape. The area is seeing growth and increases in property values.

EJSCREEN is an environmental justice mapping and screening tool. EJSCREEN is available to everyone at <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>. This tool uses environmental indicators for a community to show potential exposures. It uses demographic factors to show potential susceptibility. Using EJSCREEN, EPA looked at Census American Community Survey data estimates from 2014-2018. In a 10-square mile area around the site, there were about 2,700 residents. This area of analysis was chosen because it includes residents in the immediate and surrounding vicinity who may be most affected by cleanup activity, accounts for the groundwater flow direction, and considers the watershed.

About 15% of the population reported as people of color. One percent reported speaking English “less than well.” An estimated 23% of the population were 65 or older. Six percent were aged four and younger. Young children and older adults can be more susceptible to health impacts from contamination.

The EJSCREEN analysis for this site found limited environmental justice concerns in this community. None of the 11 environmental indicators were at the 75th percentile or above, compared to the rest of the United States, the region, or the state. It is notable that the location EPA analyzed is a smaller area within a census tract that ranks moderately on the [Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map](#). The location also abuts a more populated census tract that ranks higher on that Disparities Map. EPA will continue to be alert for environmental justice concerns in this area.

Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. EPA Region 10 works to make sure underserved, low income, and tribal communities facing disproportionate environmental risks have opportunities for meaningful participation in environmental decision-making. Many EPA environmental justice resources can be found at www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice.

Community perspectives and concerns

During regular interactions with local people, and during recent interviews, EPA has learned about the perspectives and concerns of the community.

- For the most part, people understand the need for EPA’s cleanup work.
- Several people said the cleanup seems to be going well and that they are not aware of concerns about the work being done.
- Some people were interested in how well the groundwater treatment is working and were curious about the treatment facility and how it works. (In response, EPA held a virtual Show-and-Tell featuring the treatment system.)
- One individual noted that it’s important for people to be aware that there is no groundwater contamination on the east side of the freeway.
- A couple of people noted that the cleanup crew are “nice people” and “helpful and knowledgeable.”
- A couple of people mentioned the importance of *preventing* pollution, because it is so much work to clean it up.
- Fish habitat enhancement and restoration are ongoing in the area.
- Some people do not have easy access to the Internet.
- Even so, online participation in events is increasing. People commonly get their news from the local newspaper, the *Chronicle*; and from local radio stations.



Our partners

EPA is committed to effective coordination with other agencies and organizations during its cleanup work. These include the Washington Department of Ecology, Washington State Department of Health, Lewis County, the City of Chehalis, and many others.

Twin Harbors Waterkeeper: The Waterkeeper advocates for fishable, drinkable, swimmable water in the Chehalis and Willapa Bay watersheds. As a recipient of a Washington State Department of Ecology Public Participation Grant, the Waterkeeper provides outreach and education about toxic cleanup sites. EPA has been coordinating with the Waterkeeper to raise awareness about the Hamilton/Labree cleanup work and public involvement opportunities.

CONTACT: **Lee First**, leefrider7@gmail.com, <http://twinharborswaterkeeper.org>

For more information:

Site Contacts


Zoe Lipowski, EPA Project Manager • lipowski.zoe@epa.gov • 206-553-0256

Robert Tan, EPA Project Manager • tan.robert@epa.gov • 206-553-2580

Andrea Lindsay, EPA Community Involvement Coordinator • lindsay.andrea@epa.gov • 206-553-1896

Debra Sherbina, EPA Community Involvement Coordinator • sherbina.debra@epa.gov • 206-553-0247

If you need materials in an alternative format, please contact Andrea Lindsay at 800-424-4372, ext.1896.

 *TDD or TTY users, please call 800-877-8339 and give the operator Andrea Lindsay's phone number.*

